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Women in Social Action

Pacific School of
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 Berkeley, Calif.



POLL OF WAR VIEWS IN 2500 CHURCHES

Congregational and Christian
 Leaders Expect 300,000
 Persons to Reply.

By the Associated Press.
 NEW YORK, Oct. 25.—The Council for Social Action of the Congregational and Christian Churches of America, in a nation-wide poll planned for the week ending Armistice Sunday, Nov. 10, expects to get the first factual information ever obtained on what Christian people of the United States are thinking about war.

Pointed questions are contained in the ballots sent this week to 2500 Congregational and Christian churches in all 48 states, to which from 300,000 persons are

several million Americans had not provided either secure jobs or regular incomes for steel workers. This pattern, he says, had not changed since the example about 200-

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SOCIAL ACTION

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CONTENTS

WOMEN IN SOCIAL ACTION	3
A MAJOR CHALLENGE TO AMERICAN WOMEN . . .	4
WOMEN AND INCOME	7
INDIVIDUALS IN ACTION	11
SOCIAL PRAYERS	12
HOURS AND WAGE LAWS	13
THE CAMPAIGN FOR WORLD ECONOMIC COOPERATION	14
THE FEDERAL ANTI-LYNCHING BILL	14
FROM THE FIELD	15

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Women in Social Action

Even before the days of Jane Addams—whose picture we are honored to carry on this cover—there were women active and ardent in the cause of social righteousness. They were among the pioneers in the work of settlement houses, in behalf of prison reform, in promoting the temperance movement, in demanding equal suffrage, in developing popular education at public expense. But women as a power in the political and economic life of our country are comparatively recent.

The arresting aspect of the political and economic power of the women of America is not their outstanding leaders, although there are women of distinction and of great ability in all phases of our national life. The amazing and heartening thing is the *power of ordinary women*, women who are "only housewives" and carry a full burden of home responsibility, women who are clerks, stenographers, saleswomen, teachers, lawyers, doctors—the 'mill run' of business, home and professional women. These are the women who have made the stubborn fight to end child labor, who are building a new kind of temperance movement; these are the women who educate the churches, who form pressure groups through the women's clubs, who direct the services of the League of Women Voters, who provide the Y.W.C.A. and like organizations as a common meeting ground for the needs and the ideas of factory women, business women, students. Most of these "ordinary women" are not known outside their immediate group. Theirs is the beautiful anonymity of service, the stirring achievement of human progress. It is well sometimes to pause and realize how much of this world's building is done by ordinary hands.

A Major Challenge to American Women

By KATHARINE F. LENROOT
Chief of the U. S. Children's Bureau

Some years ago, a midwife from a southwestern state wrote to the Children's Bureau asking for a copy of "Infant Care." In her letter she said:

"Times is hard and peoples is poor, but baby is born to world and parents and we have to care for our generation."

Throughout the ages women have responded freely to the calls of neighbors in distress. When medical attendance was not available they have helped to bring babies into the world. From the time when the Children's Bureau was established, 25 years ago, women have used their organized clubs and groups to further the development of the community services which today must supplement the care of parents and the help of neighbors. They have been major factors in securing local, state, and federal appropriations for maternal and child welfare. Church women have been concerned about child labor in fields and factories, and about conditions threatening the health of mothers and babies.

Today women are studying more earnestly than ever the reasons for the appalling waste of maternal and child life in the United States.

Each year more than 12,000 mothers in the United States lose their lives from conditions of pregnancy and childbirth. In 1935, 77,000 babies were born dead, 70,000 babies died before completing the first month of life, and 55,000 during the first week. The United States loses proportionately more mothers from causes connected with maternity than almost any other civilized country for which figures are available.

Over 250,000 mothers are delivered each year without medical attention. Obstetrics is acknowledged by the medical profession to be at a lower level than that of the other major clinical departments. Medical and nursing service and needed hospital care are denied mothers because of poverty or isolation. Specialized obstetrical consultant service in complicated cases is frequently not available to doctors practicing in rural areas.

In 20 years some reduction has been made in maternal deaths due to causes which can be controlled by good prenatal care, but very slight progress has been made in control of deaths and illness from other maternal causes. Moreover, the death rate of infants in the first day of life has remained stationary, and the death rate in the first week and the first month, very nearly so.

The foundation for a direct and vigorous attack on the problem of care of mothers and newborn babies has been laid under the Social Security Act, which under Title V authorized the Children's Bureau to cooperate with State health agencies in extending and strengthening maternal and child health services, especially in rural areas and other areas of special need. Forty-eight states, the District of Columbia, Hawaii, and Alaska are cooperating in this work. An annual appropriation of \$3,800,000 is authorized, all but \$980,000 of which must be matched by State or local funds.

The amounts provided are not sufficient to permit the payment of actual costs of medical and nursing care for mothers who could not otherwise obtain adequate service, and to make available obstetric consultant service, emergency hospitalization when needed, and assistance in providing a few centers for post-graduate instruction in the fundamental principles of complete maternal and infant care. Extension of the program through the provision of additional funds has been recommended by Advisory Committees to the Children's Bureau, on

which professional and lay organizations are requested, and also by the State and Territorial Health Officers, the American Public Health Association, and the American Legion. At a small conference attended by representatives of 9 lay groups, with experts in public health and medical care serving as consultants, held in Washington October 19, it was decided to place these recommendations before all interested organizations for study and consideration. The Children's Bureau, moreover, was asked to call a larger conference on care of mothers and babies, to consider the broad problems involved in saving maternal and infant life. This conference will be held in Washington in the early winter.

Social Action must begin with concern for maternity and childhood if the future of the race is to be safeguarded. The sacrifices which a nation or people is willing to make for its children and youth are an index of its belief in the value of life and its confidence in its own destiny. The great Hebrew prophet of a better social order said: "And they that shall be of thee shall build up the old waste places; thou shalt raise up the foundations of many generations." The people of Israel kept their youth and their strength because they looked for the coming of a child who would lead them from bondage and desolation to liberty and peace.

The National Child Labor Committee writes:

"We are hoping that the Council for Social Action can work with us again this year in the observance of Child Labor Day in January, 1938.

"Child labor will be a vital legislative issue in 1938. Even if, as we hope, Congress enacts at the special session, a federal child labor law based on the interstate commerce power, this will give protection only to about 25 per cent of America's working children. Ratification of the Child Labor Amendment must be brought to completion, and unwise substitutes must be opposed.

"Child Labor Day is an occasion on which large numbers of organizations can participate simultaneously in the campaign for the abolition of child labor. We hope that it will have the widest possible observance."

Women and Income

By KATHARINE TERRILL

Prices are going up. No one knows this better than women. As mothers, housekeepers and wage earners, women must make the family income meet the family's needs. Increasingly we are hearing that women spend the bulk of the nation's payroll. Not only are women spending wages, salaries, incomes and the butter and egg money but they are acquiring a larger share of the nation's wealth. Dr. Neil Carothers of Lehigh University is authority for the statement that women already are owners of two-fifths of the wealth of the United States.

Much of the advertising in the slick-paper magazines is directed toward women buyers. These ads cater to the idea of happy healthy people; cooking appetizing food on electric ranges; cruising on air lanes; drinking pineapple juice; riding in large cars; listening to the radio; reading best sellers. But the 1930 census reports reveal surprising facts about family incomes which make these attractive advertisements look like mirages.

According to Brookings Institution studies based upon figures furnished by the Bureau of Labor Statistics, 27,500,000 families in the United States had in 1929 an aggregate yearly income of 77 billion dollars or an average per family of \$2800 a year. But these figures do not mean that the majority of American families actually had an income around this figure. As a matter of fact, only six million families in the United States enjoy an income of \$3000 or more. These six million families receive 56 billion dollars of the total 77 billion dollars income, leaving the 21 million families who constitute the majority with less than one-third of the total income.

An American family according to standards set by Dr. Mordecai Ezekiel of the United States Department of Agriculture requires \$2500 annually in order to live in decency, health

and comfort. In 1929, more than two-thirds of American families were receiving incomes considerably under this amount.

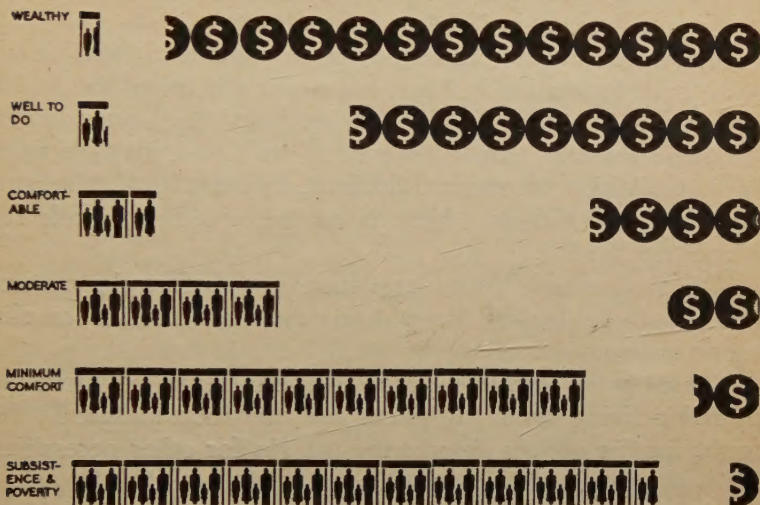
The majority of women, then, do not have enough income to buy the right food, to pay enough rent or to keep up their home and provide other necessities for their families. Many of them work and run homes besides. There are nearly 11 million employed women in the United States. One-third of these women carry full responsibility for home-making in their families as well as holding a paid job. Their wages, on the whole, are low. This low wage standard is due partly to the traditional ideas of an earlier age when women's work was done within the four walls of the home and *not paid for in coin*. It is due even more to an economic system which permits the exploitation of workers.

"The family," declares the United States Women's Bureau, "having been accustomed to receive goods without cash expenditure, expected to pay little for them. The manufacturer using women largely for his labor supply expected to pay a low wage for their service. Both tradition and the requirements of the economic system tended to keep women's earnings at a very low level. Indeed a revision of the older ideas, that formed a basis for the low wage scale in certain of our industries, is long overdue in the newer social economy.

"The traditional idea of the low value of women's work and the manufacturer's consequent use of her labor to keep down his own costs have been important factors in keeping the entire level low for men as well as women. For example, the cotton textile industry, which has always been a large women employer, has had wages low in relation to those in most industries whose processes, though they could not be counted more skilled, ordinarily were performed by men whose services were at a premium."

What does this unequal distribution of income signify? It is easier to grasp figures in terms of life (and death). "Ten

NUMBER OF FAMILIES IN VARIOUS INCOME GROUPS, 1929



703-1064

FAMILY GROUP REPRESENTS ONE MILLION FAMILIES, EACH CIRCLE \$2,000

diseases" says Josephine Roche, Assistant Secretary of Treasury, speaking before the American Public Health Association last October, "take the toll of three out of four of our deaths. Where do they strike most often and hardest? In the homes of the poor Pneumonia kills three and a half times more unskilled workers than professional . . . cancer's toll of the unskilled workers is 50 per cent higher than the professional."

Hidden away in the school news in the back pages of a daily newspaper is the report of the division of physically handicapped children of the public schools. We read in this report that one hundred and thirty-five thousand children in the elementary schools of New York City are too weak and undernourished to profit by regular attendance in their classes. This concerns an army of children, almost as many as there are people living in Des Moines, Iowa, or Canton, Ohio. It is the

concern of thousands of families unable to provide these children with the food and shelter they need.

What can we do? What is being done?

Legislation helps. "The universal experience with minimum wage legislation is that it has materially raised the wages of large numbers of women" so declares the United States Women's Bureau. Among the states with *no* minimum wage laws are: Maine, Vermont, Michigan, Indiana, Iowa, Missouri, Nebraska and Kansas. Here is an opportunity to work for higher standards.

The Wages and Hours legislation now before the present session of the United States Congress also deserves careful consideration.

Consumer organization helps. Wage increases are cancelled by rising living costs. If prices rise, the food budget in the lower income groups absorbs the margin for other necessities. Medical care, clothes, recreation, go by the board. Organized consumers have effected results. Meat prices in New York came down as a result of consumer action. Consumer action—which means ordinary people acting together—can readily effect standards both of price and of conditions under which goods are made.

The time is approaching when women not only spend a large part of the nation's income but have large influence in determining the buying power, economic and social, of the nation's wealth.

Labor organization helps. For example, workers, many of them women in the largest textile mill in Lawrence, Massachusetts, the American Woolen Mills, received an increase in their wages when a union contract was signed in October, 1937. Again, 17,000 New York City laundry workers won a wage advance with their union contract.

The American Youth Congress, 55 West Forty-second Street, New York City, has prepared Anti-War Christmas and New Year cards. "Twenty cards that are different," done by outstanding cartoonists and artists of today on panelled, vellum paper. The price is one dollar per box of twenty.

Individuals in Action

The following thought-provoking incidents come from Mrs. Leslie E. Swain, vice-president of the Woman's American Baptist Foreign Missionary Society. Indeed, they are more than thought-provoking; they are action-provoking.

A certain woman in Providence believed that it was wrong to give children implements of war with which to play. One morning she came down to prepare her breakfast and found as she opened her package of breakfast food, some cutouts of implements of war. Her first reaction was, "Oh, I am so thankful my children are grown up," and then her second thought was, "But thousands of other children will get these cutouts." Then came the usual reaction, "I cannot do anything about it." But in the middle of the morning, she could not resist and sat down at her desk and wrote the breakfast food company just how she felt about the whole matter of making toys of implements of war. Within a few days, to her amazement, she had an answer from the breakfast food company which said that they would not for the world do anything to make this a war-like world. Not only would they cease publishing any more of these cutouts but they would withdraw all the packages in the storehouse.

As I told this story one day, a dear friend of mine asked me whether I had heard her experience. One day she read in the newspaper that a certain book was being contemplated as a film. This book, she felt, was disgusting and gave an entirely wrong picture of college life. She went through somewhat the same reasoning as the woman above, and then finally wrote the film company at great length. Within a short time, she had an answer saying that they were just going into conference about that book when her letter arrived. They had decided not to film it and, not only that, but they mimeographed a long section from her letter and distributed it to their executive staff to use as a criterion when they considered other books.

A promotional idea for Social Action Committees which want to get special numbers of SOCIAL ACTION magazine into the hands of the congregation: In Broadway Tabernacle, New York City (Allan Chalmers, pastor), the Social Action Committee distributed 450 copies of "Arms and Men" by handing some out free, saying on a clipped sheet: "If you agree that this is good, give us the cost, 10 c., so that we can hand out more." The cost to the Committee of the "Promotional Campaign" was 50c.

Social Prayers

These prayers were sent to us by Ethel J. Newcomer of Yakima. They are printed with her personal comments, which seem particularly pertinent and searching.

"We thank Thee, God, for all Thy goodness sends. Amen."

This is the prayer said by the youngest one before the evening meal. It is long enough to add a graciousness to the ceremony of eating and it expresses what we feel.

We have talked together about it. Considering the many people who do not have enough to eat, it seems a little embarrassing to say thank you for a meal that consists of several courses including dessert, not to mention the candy and nuts.

Muriel Lester can give thanks unblushingly because she gives away everything except enough for simple needs.

Shall I thank God for the comforts and luxuries of life while others starve for the necessities? Perhaps it is because of some awful mistake that I may feast while others have no bread. I do not know. But if ever there is a longer prayer at the evening meal it will be something like this,

'We thank Thee, God, for all Thy goodness sends.

For sun and rain and soil

And frosts that color apples red,

For wisdom Thou hast given men

To plant and care for seeds and growing things.

We thank Thee, God for food.

There is enough for everyone

To share according to his need.

Help us to learn that secret art of distribution

So that our brothers everywhere

May have enough to eat.

Then will we pray together,

'We thank Thee, God, for all Thy goodness sends.' Amen."

The last prayer of the day might be this,

"I thank Thee, God, for this good bed Thou has given to me."

It might be except for places I have seen where whole families sleep on one tumbled down bed. And children I know who sleep on rags piled on the floor.

Was I chosen to be one of those who sleep on a good bed? A bed that not only guarantees my rest but my beauty also? Do we pray to a God of special privilege or to a God who loves us all?

I might give away my bed and sleep on the spare one that guarantees nothing at all. But this does not solve the problem. It is harder than that. However, I can at least be honest in my prayer.

*"We thank Thee, God, for beds,
For cotton, wool, and iron
And all the things that men may use
With skill to make a place for rest.
It is so good to sleep.
Must weary men lie on a bench
And children shiver on the floor?
There are so many beds, enough for all.
Dear God, please show us how to pass them 'round,
So that each child on earth may have a bed
As safe and warm and comfortable as mine. Amen."*

Hours and Wage Laws

This year has seen many advances in legislation protecting workers. From 1909 until 1923 minimum wage legislation was constitutional; then it was declared unconstitutional until March 29, 1937. Since that date, 22 states and the District of Columbia have enacted minimum wage laws. In California the "unconstitutional" law remained in full force even during the days of its defeat.

The speeding-up processes of industry have made doubly pressing the need for relieving stress through shortened hours. Pennsylvania's forty-four hour week is now the shortest established by state law; North Carolina was the only Southern state to cut hours this year, reducing the eleven-hour day to nine hours. Vermont scuttled its ten and one-half hour day for a nine-hour day and fifty-four hour week; New Hampshire sets its weekly limit at forty-eight hours. There are now thirty states with maximum working days of eight or nine hours for women in manufacturing and other occupations. Six states impose no daily restrictions. Tennessee permits the longest day of any state having an hours law—ten and one-half.

Many states have made great efforts this year toward an hours law. If the proposed federal law becomes a certainty, the states will be upheld in their struggle. Here, as in so many other instances, the power is with the people. Women combined in pressure-groups or singly with their pens in hand, become their own best advocates.

The Campaign for World Economic Cooperation

Listen in!

The radio is carrying the concerted drive of American peace organizations for World Economic Cooperation into millions of homes. Broadcasts over the entire Columbia network have been made every two weeks on Sunday afternoons, since the inauguration of the campaign on September 19 when leading world statesmen spoke on the problems of economics and peace. (We will gladly send you—for a two-cent stamp—a 16-page pamphlet containing those addresses.) This month's program:

December 12—2:00 to 2:30 P.M., E.S.T. Subject: *Labor and Economic Cooperation*. Speakers: representatives from the American labor movement and from the International Labor Office at Geneva.

December 25—2:00 to 2:30 P.M., E.S.T. A special Christmas program on an international hook-up, featuring religious leaders around the world.

What you can do. Listen in. Invite some friends into your home to hear and discuss the addresses. Announce the broadcast at your church service. Send a letter to the editor of your local newspaper, telling him the purpose and value of these broadcasts. And in connection with the broadcast read and study *Peaceful Change—The Alternative to War* (10c. plus 5c. postage).

The Federal Anti-Lynching Bill

Unless there is unforeseen delay over the farm bill, the anti-lynching bill will again be before the Senate in the near future. The chances of its being passed seem to be excellent, in spite of the efforts of the Southern minority to avert a vote. Action now on the part of the friends of effective federal legislation against lynching can bring the long years of struggle to fruition.

Write your Senators to thank them for their efforts to pass the bill, and to urge them to resist any attempt to delay further its passage or remove the financial penalty by amendment. The fact that those who flogged Joseph Shoemaker to death two years ago in Tampa still go unpunished is one reason among many why the law is needed now.

From the Field

Report from the Social Action Committee of the First Congregational Church of Evanston: "We have instituted a series of weekly forum discussion meetings which are being held Sunday evenings. The first six meetings have been devoted to an analysis of the relief and public works situation with speakers not only from the public services including the employment service, but also from University, private social work, business and organized unemployment groups. At our sixth and final meeting on relief next Sunday, we hope not only to pass resolutions but to propose local activities that may be of assistance in relieving the present critical situation At the last meeting we had a panel discussion with a building contractor, a doctor of political science, an alderman, a broker, the head of the United Charities of Chicago, a professor in the field of education and a member of the Workers Alliance. Proposals ranged all the way from abolishing relief completely to the suggestion that the tax structure of the state and nation needs to be thoroughly modified to permit larger expenditure and better devised programs of public works and unemployment relief.

"Following these series on relief, we are taking up the subject of housing and will probably devote almost as many meetings to it. This will involve also a study of the racial problem, for a considerable part of our bad housing in Evanston is now providing the living quarters for our Negro population There is a definite desire on the part of the committee and others whom we have drawn in, that we must go beyond the mere discussion of these issues and try to discover fruitful action to take."

The State of Washington has this year enacted the only law on the statute books of any state governing hours of domestic employees. Much of the pressure which made this law an actuality came from social action groups in that state.

AN ACT relating to the employment of household or domestic employees providing penalties for its violation.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATION OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON

Section 1. No male or female householder domestic employee shall be employed by any person for a longer period than sixty hours in any one week. Employed time shall include minutes or hours when the employee has to remain subject to the call of the employer and when the employee is not free to follow his or her inclinations.

Section 2. In cases of emergency such employee may be employed for a longer period than sixty hours; provided, that the employer pays, to the employee, double the amount of the base pay per hour for such time in excess of the sixty hours.

Section 3. In the event any part of this act is held invalid such invalidity shall not affect the validity of the remainder of this act.

Section 4. Any employer violating this act shall be guilty of a misdemeanor.

From the Publication Department of the National Council of the Young Men's Christian Associations: "Your whole series of pamphlets seems to me one of the most useful enterprises which has been done by any of our denominations in recent years. I hope it is meeting with the success it deserves."

A VOICE OUT OF DARKNESS

Who gave the rich the keys of life and death,
Who hands my children to hell's racketeers?
I gave them life, I give you love. The breath
Of very God is in you—shame your fears!

Courage: O unconsolated and desolate,
Up from your knees and challenge these controls;
Denounce the knaves that play at God and Fate,
Defy the thieves that rob you of your souls!

The Sky is speaking in the rising storm!
Welcome the whirlwind, if it be His choice!
Lo, in the night I see a looming form
With lightnings in His band, doom in His voice,
Crying, adown the winds of wrath and woe:
My poor, poor people—let my people go!

From: *Thunder Over Jerusalem*
by ALLEN E. CROSS

Child Labor Day —

January 29, 30, or 31

The struggle for the abolition of child labor in the United States is far from ended. Ratification of the Child Labor Amendment was not completed during 1937, and thousands of underprivileged American children were left without hope for immediate protection from the federal government.

You have helped to win victories in the past. The number of boys and girls employed in factories and mills has decreased. But many still work on streets, in laundries, stores and hotels, in large-scale agricultural enterprises and in industrial homework. Often they are completely unprotected against low wages, long hours and unhealthful working conditions.

Child Labor Day was instituted 32 years ago. It is an occasion on which a nation-wide drive is made each year to arouse public opinion against the disgrace of child labor. Your help is needed.

Observe Child Labor Day this year. Arrange child labor talks, plays and programs in churches, schools and clubs. Take stories to your local newspapers and arrange for radio broadcasts. Material can be obtained from the National Child Labor Committee, 419 Fourth Avenue, New York, N. Y.